

**REMARKS**

Claims 2 through 27 are pending in this Application, of which claims 19 through 23 stand withdrawn from consideration pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.142(b).

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the Examiner's allowance of claims 24 through 26, and the Examiner's indication that claims 7, 8, and 15 through 17 contain allowable subject matter, noting that claim 18 depends from claim 16, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 27 have been amended and claim 1 cancelled. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Specifically, each of claims 7, 15 and 16, indicated allowable, has been placed in substantially independent form, claim 1 cancelled, and the dependency of claims 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 27 appropriately changed. Applicants submit that the present Amendment does not generate any new matter issue.

**Claims 1 through 3, 5-5 (presumably intending 5-6), 9 through 12, 14, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for lack of novelty as evidenced by JP 2002-223039 (JP '039).**

This rejection is traversed. Indeed, this rejection has been rendered moot by canceling claim 1, placing claim 7, indicated allowable, in substantially independent form, and making claims 2 (and hence 3), 4, 5 (and hence 6), 9 through 12 and 14 dependent upon claim 7.

Applicants separately argue the patentability of **claim 18**, because claim 18 depends from claim 16, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter, and claim 16 has been substantially placed in substantially independent form.

Applicants, therefore, submit that the imposed rejection of claims 1 through 3, 5-5 (presumably intending 5-6), 9 through 12, 14, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for lack of novelty as evidenced by JP '039 is not viable and, hence, solicit withdrawal thereof.

**Claims 4 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness predicated upon JP '039 in view of Gotto et al.**

**Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness predicated upon JP '039 in view of Hayafuji.**

Each of the above rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is traversed. Indeed, each of the above rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been rendered moot by placing claim 7, in substantially independent form, and making claims 4, 27 and 13 dependent on claim 7.

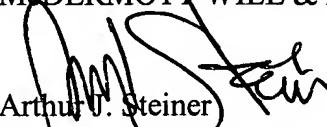
Applicants, therefore, submit that the imposed rejection of claims 4 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness predicated upon JP '039 in view of Gotto et al., and the imposed rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness predicated upon JP '039 in view of Hayafuji are not viable and, hence, solicit withdrawal thereof.

Applicants again acknowledge, with appreciation, the Examiner's allowance of claims 24 through 26, and the Examiner's indication that claims 7, 15 and 16 contain allowable subject matter. As previously pointed out, claims 7, 15 and 16 have been placed in substantially independent form, with claims 17 and 18 dependent upon claim 16, and the remaining claims dependent upon claim 7. Applicants submit that all active claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Favorable consideration is, therefore, solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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